

application. The present application is a continuation of prior application No. 09/982,384, filed October 18, 2001. Takeshi was published March 17, 2005, and was filed August 21, 2003. Both of these dates are subsequent to applicants' filing date. Thus, Takeshi should be withdrawn as a reference.

The action admits that the primary reference, Meeker U.S. Patent No. 5,742,034, does not disclose or suggest the claimed invention. This being the case, and Takeshi not being a proper reference, the claims should now be allowed. Nevertheless, the rejections are individually addressed below.

Applicants traverse the rejection of claims 44, 45, 48, 49, 51, 53, 54, 57-60 and 62 as obvious over Meeker in view of Takeshi.

Independent claim 44 specifies a safe comprising a housing, a door movably mounted to the housing and an electronic lock including a lock control circuit for selectively opening or locking the door. A programmable control unit is operatively associated with the electronic lock for monitoring activities performed with the safe. The control unit comprises a communication interface for communication on an external network. The control unit automatically transmits information associated with the monitored activities to a user via the external network responsive to select changes in status of the monitored activities.

Meeker does not disclose or suggest a safe including a control unit comprising a communication interface for communication on an external network. Nor does it disclose or suggest a control unit automatically transmitting information associated with monitored activities

to a user via an external network. The action references Meeker col. 4, lines 45-53 as teaching that “. . .communication/transmission is automatic since no manual intervention is involved . . .”. There is no support for such a statement. This passage does not state that no manual intervention is involved. It simply describes the type of reports that can be printed. Manual intervention is required, as discussed below.

Meeker is directed to a safe including a printed circuit board connected to an input/output communication port or jack 154. The system can generate a report sent through the port or jack 154. An RS 232 or RS 485 port comprises a serial port used for communications between a computer and a peripheral device. Indeed, Meeker describes at col. 4, lines 14-21, that the port can be used to interface with an accounting system or computer. There is no disclosure or suggestion that the safe be hooked up to an external network. Moreover, Meeker only discloses that a user can print reports or generate reports that are sent to the port. There is no disclosure or suggestion of the safe automatically transmitting information associated with monitored activities to a user via an external network responsive to select changes in status of monitored activities. Instead, the safes are described more in the nature of a peripheral device to a computer. There is no disclosure or suggestion that the control unit include an interface or provides communication on an external network.

As discussed above, the action is incorrect in its discussion of Meeker relative to claim 44. For example, in sub-paragraph “a)”, the action states that the control unit automatically transmits information associated with the monitored activities to a user via the external network,

referencing col. 4, lines 45-53. The cited passage simply identifies reports that can be generated. There is no disclosure or suggestion that the reports be automatically transmitted. To the contrary, the Examiner ignores the discussion at col. 3, lines 60-65 which indicate that "If desired, a printed report of each individual transaction may be obtained from the printer 32 by **following appropriate prompts** appearing on the LCD screen 24". (Emphasis added.) Entering prompts requires that any such information is transmitted response to a manual command, rather than being automatically transmitted.

In sub-paragraph "c)", the action suggests that the deficiency has to do with the information being automatically transmitted responsive to select change in status of the monitored activities. The alleged motivation described thereafter is not understood. The fact that a general purpose computer could be programmed to perform a particular function does not support a conclusion that there is a motivation to modify the teachings of the reference. A general purpose computer can be programmed to perform virtually any function. The reference itself must suggest the claimed combination in order to support an obviousness rejection.

Meeker does not disclose transmitting information to a user via an external network. There is no disclosure of an external network. It simply states that information can be provided to a port. There is no support for the statement that the generating reports is without user intervention. The specification specifically requires user intervention, as noted above, by requiring following appropriate prompts appearing on a screen. Thus, it is not apparent how such transmission can be considered automatic. Clearly, the transmission is not automatic. Thus,

there is no support for the conclusion that transmitting responsive to select changes prevents unnecessary transmission of previously transmitted status. Moreover, it is not clear how transmitting responsive to select changes prevents unnecessary transmission of previously transmitted status and frivolous information as there is no such report being generated. Meeker simply discloses that a user can generate a report if desired. Thus, there is no motivation to make the changes suggested in the action and the rejection is improper.

The action relies on the teaching of Takeshi with respect to monitoring status from an electronic lock remotely by automatically communicating the lock status and status change information to a remote user. As noted above, Takeshi is not prior art to the present application. Therefore, reliance on Takeshi is improper. Moreover, Takeshi is not directed to a safe, such as in Meeker, which is a stand alone device. Takeshi is directed to a computer network environment which discusses automatically transmitting various information. The fact that monitored information in a network environment can be transmitted is irrelevant to any teachings of Meeker which is directed to a stand alone safe. Therefore, even if Takeshi were prior art, the combination would be improper.

Claims 45, 48, 49 and 51 depend from claim 44 and are not obvious for the same reasons therefor.

Independent claim 53 specifies an apparatus for monitoring a safe comprising an electronic lock for controlling a safe and through which a plurality of different types of transactions can be performed. A programmable control unit is coupled to the electronic lock for

controlling the electronic lock and recording security information related to the different types of transactions. The control unit comprises a communication interface for communication on an external network. The control unit automatically transmits recorded security information to a user via the external network responsive to performance of select ones of the transactions.

Claim 53 is not obvious for the same reasons discussed above relative to claim 54.

Likewise, dependent claims 54, 57-60 and 62 are not obvious.

For the above reasons, claims 44, 45, 48, 49, 51, 53, 54, 57-60 and 62 are believed allowable and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Applicants traverse the rejection of claims 46 and 55 as obvious over Meeker in view of Takeshi and Wagner U.S. Patent No. 3,878,511.

Claims 46 and 55 depend from claims 44 and 53, discussed above, and further specify a duress sensor and the control unit transmits indication of a duress condition determined by the duress sensor.

Wagner does not disclose or suggest the deficiencies noted above with respect to Meeker. While Wagner discloses a duress sensor, the duress sensing operates an electrical contact which can be connected to provide remote indication. There is no disclosure or suggestion regarding connection to an external network. Therefore, the combination does not result in the claimed invention and the rejection ought be withdrawn.

Applicants traverse the rejection of claims 47 and 56 as obvious over Meeker in view of Takeshi and Bentley U.S. Patent No. 6,529,723.

Claims 47 and 56 depend from claims 44 and 53, respectively, and further specify that the control unit transmits recorded security information to a user via the external network with an e-mail notification.

Bentley does not disclose or suggest the deficiencies noted with respect to Meeker. Moreover, the combination is improper. Bentley is directed to a network operation system having nothing to do with a safe. It is not analogous with Meeker. The references are not properly combined.

The action states that Meeker does not disclose any notification format. Indeed, Meeker does not disclose any type of notification. It merely discloses that the system can generate specified reports or provide determined status information. There is no disclosure or suggestion that the safe itself automatically provides notification of any monitored event. The ability to generate a requested report is distinct from the control unit itself generating a notification. Claims 47 and 56 are believed allowable for these reasons as well.

Applicants traverse the rejection of claims 52 and 61 as obvious over Meeker in view of Takeshi and Nishijima U.S. Patent No. 5,915,069.

Claims 52 and 61 depend from claims 44 and 53, respectively, and further specify a video capture device for monitoring an external area proximate a safe wherein the monitored activities comprise video information recorded by the control unit.

Nishijima does not disclose or suggest the deficiencies noted with respect to Meeker. Moreover, the system of Nishijima is a stand alone system. There is no disclosure or suggestion

that it be integrated with a safe wherein a safe control unit records video information from a video capture device. Therefore, the combination is improper and the combination does not result in the claimed invention.

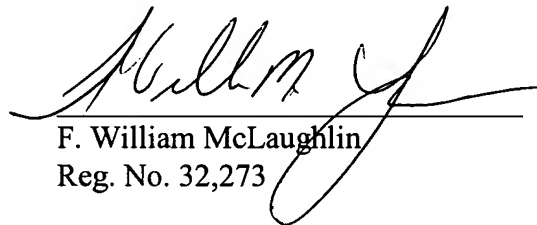
For the above reasons, claims 52 and 61 are believed allowable.

Summarizing, the principal reference, Meeker, relates to a safe connected as a peripheral device to a computer. There is no disclosure nor suggestion that the safe be connected to an external network to automatically transmit information to a user via the external network. The secondary reference, Takeshi, is not prior art.

Reconsideration of the application and allowance and passage to issue are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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